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‘Another Duh Moment’: Merck’s Molnupiravir Pill Causes New COVID Variants

A study published Monday in Nature showed that Merck’s COVID-19 pill molnupiravir induces mutations that can lead to new SARS-CoV-2 variants. Numerous doctors and scientists voiced concerns about the drug’s mutagenicity before it was approved in 2021.

By John-Michael Dumais

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Merck’s COVID-19 pill causes viral mutations that can lead to new variants, according to a peer-reviewed paper published Monday in Nature.

“Molnupiravir, an antiviral medication that has been widely used against SARS-CoV-2, acts by inducing mutations in the virus genome during replication,” wrote the study’s authors.

This capability could make it more difficult to predict how the virus will change and spread, according to the authors, who warned that patients who do not clear the virus after a few days could spread its mutated form to others.

Dr. Harvey Risch, professor emeritus of epidemiology and senior research scientist at the Yale School of Public Health, told The Defender the study was “very high-quality research” and that the results are “another ‘duh’ moment.”

Risch said:

> “A number of us, myself included, predicted from its mechanism of action that this would be the result when molnupiravir was approved and rolled out. Hence the ‘duh’ — it was obvious. Obvious to everyone except the FDA [U.S. Food and Drug Administration] that is locked into pharma corruption.”

U.S., U.K. and South African researchers analyzed 15 million COVID-19 genomes, finding that the new variants emerged in 2022 after the drug was introduced to many countries, CNBC reported. Many of the novel sequences were the same as those found in patients receiving the antiviral.

The researchers identified high rates of a specific mutation associated with molnupiravir in countries such as Australia, where retirement homes stocked up on the drug.

Most of the mutations linked to the drug have not been shown to be more serious or transmissible, however. The authors said most mutations weaken the virus by interfering with its self-replication ability.